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MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE: Philadelphia, Pa.

Technical information: (215) 597-3282 BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic

Media contact: (215) 861-5600 BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – December 2019

Area prices increased 0.1 percent since October; up 1.8 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson inched up 0.1 percent from October to December, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the recent two-month increase was due to increases in both the all items less food and energy index (0.1 percent) and food index (0.6 percent). The energy index declined since October, down 0.9 percent. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U increased 1.8 percent. The over-the-year rise was due almost entirely to an increase in the all items less food and energy index (1.9 percent). The energy index and food index also rose over the year, up 2.0 and 1.1 percent, respectively. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

The food index advanced 0.6 percent over the last two months. Prices increased for food away from home, up 0.7 percent, and food at home, up 0.4 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were higher for chicken and eggs, while prices were lower for nonfrozen noncarbonated juices and drinks.

Over the year, the food index increased 1.1 percent. Prices rose for food away from home (2.9 percent) while those for food at home declined (-0.4 percent).

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, decreased 0.9 percent since October. Prices were lower over the last two months for electricity (-2.1 percent); prices for gasoline and utility (piped) gas service also decreased, down 0.2 percent and 0.9 percent, respectively.

Over the year, the energy index rose 2.0 percent. Prices were higher for gasoline, up 9.7 percent, while prices decreased for electricity (-5.6 percent) and utility (piped) gas service (-3.1 percent) since December 2018.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy inched up 0.1 percent from October to December. Higher prices for new and used motor vehicles (2.9 percent) and education and communication (0.9 percent) were moderated by lower prices for medical care (-3.7 percent), among others.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.9 percent since December 2018, led by higher prices for medical care (8.8 percent) and recreation (5.4 percent). Prices were lower for apparel (-6.6 percent), among others.

The Consumer Price Index for February 2020 is scheduled to be released Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 8:30 am (ET).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson is published bi-monthly. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.











































The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **Note: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, Core Based Statistical Area** includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties in Maryland.














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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019	Dec. 2019	Dec. 2018	Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019
All items.....		257.616		257.847	1.8	0.1	
Food and beverages		263.097		264.502	1.1	0.5	
Food		262.568		264.079	1.1	0.6	
Food at home		232.677	231.054	233.690	-0.4	0.4	1.1
Cereals and bakery products		285.320		282.873	-2.0	-0.9	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		229.877		230.123	5.2	0.1	
Dairy and related products		238.557		240.367	6.5	0.8	
Fruits and vegetables		281.552		281.733	-3.5	0.1	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		166.172		170.550	-4.4	2.6	
Other food at home		208.403		209.613	-2.7	0.6	
Food away from home.....		306.359		308.602	2.9	0.7	
Alcoholic beverages		267.661		267.725	0.9	0.0	
Housing(1).....		260.818		260.902	0.1	0.0	
Shelter		309.014	309.328	309.363	0.3	0.1	0.0
Rent of primary residence		363.532	365.013	365.802	1.0	0.6	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		323.649	324.910	325.867	1.6	0.7	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		323.649	324.910	325.867	1.6	0.7	0.3
Fuels and utilities.....		223.087		220.383	-3.8	-1.2	
Household energy		194.389	189.200	191.118	-5.1	-1.7	1.0
Energy services.....		208.408	202.397	204.227	-5.4	-2.0	0.9
Electricity		196.137	189.445	191.973	-5.6	-2.1	1.3
Utility (piped) gas service		180.178	183.845	178.522	-3.1	-0.9	-2.9
Household furnishings and operations.....		120.778		121.427	2.7	0.5	
Apparel		122.678		123.463	-6.6	0.6	
Transportation		198.690		201.787	3.5	1.6	
Private transportation		196.909		201.395	4.1	2.3	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		94.856		97.565	1.0	2.9	
New vehicles(1).....		190.927		198.188	1.1	3.8	
Used cars and trucks(1)		239.217		237.770	0.2	-0.6	
Motor fuel		216.612	216.707	216.101	9.4	-0.2	-0.3
Gasoline (all types).....		211.722	211.849	211.286	9.7	-0.2	-0.3
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		213.215	213.507	212.915	9.8	-0.1	-0.3
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		230.396	230.170	229.581	9.2	-0.4	-0.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		225.221	223.947	223.560	8.7	-0.7	-0.2
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		853.690		908.685	8.7	6.4	
Medical care		487.569		469.392	8.8	-3.7	
Recreation		129.671		131.039	5.4	1.1	
Education and communication(3).....		149.558		150.852	3.0	0.9	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)		1,240.153		1,240.184	4.1	0.0	
Other goods and services		421.060		414.238	-1.2	-1.6	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		181.315		183.136	1.7	1.0	
Commodities less food and beverages		144.349		146.164	2.1	1.3	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019	Dec. 2019	Dec. 2018	Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019
Nondurables less food and beverages...		189.983		189.609	2.6	-0.2	
Durables		98.916		101.680	1.5	2.8	
Services.....		331.871		330.683	1.9	-0.4	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		238.399		238.581	2.7	0.1	
All items less medical care		246.083		247.277	1.2	0.5	
Commodities less food		148.044		149.835	2.0	1.2	
Nondurables		223.743		224.139	1.8	0.2	
Nondurables less food.....		194.312		193.960	2.5	-0.2	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		371.359		367.965	3.8	-0.9	
Services less medical care services.....		316.596		317.286	1.0	0.2	
Energy(1).....		209.635	207.016	207.695	2.0	-0.9	0.3
All items less energy		263.127		263.569	1.8	0.2	
All items less food and energy		263.068		263.371	1.9	0.1	

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on a March 1978=100 base.
- (2) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.
- (3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.
- (4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.
- (5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.